Seamless Transition Practices: A National Perspective of Collaborative Strategies

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Overview of Session

- Understanding the black box of interagency collaboration
- Communities of practice: Creating a context for interagency collaboration
- Transition programs for replication, connecting research and practice
- Fundamentals of successful program replication

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What we know…

- Youth with disabilities experience lower post-school outcomes as compared to the general population of youth, despite legislative mandates of multiple public agencies (Test, Aspel & Everson, 2006).
- Studies show fragmentation and duplication of supports and services negatively impact the outcomes of youth with disabilities (National Council on Disability, 2008).

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What we know…

- However, research in the field of secondary transition over thirty years has identified interagency collaboration as essential to address these barriers (Kochhar-Bryant, 2008).
- In a review of the secondary transition literature, an understanding of collaboration mechanisms is elusive (Test, Mazzotti, Mustian, Fowler, Ortering & Kohler, 2009).

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Exploring the Black Box of Interagency Collaboration

Domain: Secondary Transition of Youth with Disabilities

Interagency Collaboration: Predictor of Successful Secondary Transition Postschool Outcomes

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How do you define & describe interagency collaboration?

Identify key phrases & words

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Defining & Describing Interagency Collaboration

Over the past forty years, the black box of interagency collaboration has been explored. However, there is no consensus regarding the definition in the literature. Because it is a complex construct, this leads to a lack of shared understanding across individuals, organizations and agencies serving transitioning youth.

Your first step to building successful interagency collaboration is to understand what it means to your team.

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A Synthesis of Research: Defining & Describing Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration is a *dynamic, ongoing process of interaction* of those individuals, organizations and agencies with a stake in the transition of youth with disabilities from school to adult life (Morningstar, 1999).

The *purpose* of interagency collaboration is to meet the needs and provide supports of youth and their families through this transition process, by strengthening the transition service delivery system (Morningstar, 1999; Kohler, 1996; and Kochhar-Bryant, 2008).

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A Synthesis of Research: Defining & Describing Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration is a *process of participation* of people, groups, and organizations (Johnson, McLaughlin, & Christensen, 1982; Kochhar-Bryant, 2008).

Communication is essential to promote collaboration (Sadao, 2000; Kohler, 1996).

An important characteristic of interagency collaboration is the need to solve problems by *focusing on addressing barriers to knowledge* because of the complexity of the service delivery system (Kochhar-Bryant, 2008).

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What are the barriers to successful interagency collaboration?

Identify key phrases & words

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What are the facilitators of successful interagency collaboration?

Identify key phrases & words

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Factors Influencing Successful Interagency Collaboration

Many of the factors are potential factors acting as barriers, as well as contributing to the success of interagency collaboration. In a comparison of the factors influencing interagency collaboration within secondary transition, themes emerged which fit into several categories.

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Exploring Factors Influencing Interagency Collaboration
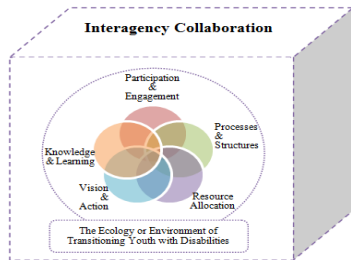
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Exploring Factors Influencing Interagency Collaboration

Ecological or environmental factors:
- *Complexity of transition system of agencies*
- *Agency cultural differences*
- *Change processes*

Participation and engagement:
- *Interpersonal relationships*
- *Agency relationships*
- *Agency commitment*
- *Interagency leadership*

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Exploring Factors Influencing Interagency Collaboration

Vision and action:
- *Interagency vision and goals*
- *Interagency planning*

Resource allocation:
- *Resource allocation*

Processes and structures:
- *Interagency processes and structures:*
- *Interagency agreements*

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Exploring Factors Influencing Interagency Collaboration

Knowledge and learning:
- *Interagency information sharing and data management*
- *Information sharing and communication*
- *Learning*

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Examining a "Context" to Promote Successful Interagency Collaboration

How do you continually learn from one another?

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Context for Successful Interagency Collaboration

- There have been many studies of interagency coordinating bodies and various levels of transition teams.
- Because of complex factors requiring problem-solving and change, collaboration is a process of discovery where relationships, new knowledge is constructed through a synthesis of ideas (Kochhar-Bryant, 2008).
- Through this process of social learning, various disciplines can make decisions, define actions, solve problems, and develop new policies and processes, and develop practices (Kocchar-Bryant).

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Context: Formation & Cultivation of Communities of Practice

To form a CoP, members must meet three criteria: (1) share common characteristics (interests, expertise, roles, goals); (2) interact directly (physically or virtually), resulting in a shared repertoire; and (3) possess a common domain and set of practices (Koliba & Gajda, 2009). Membership can be full, peripheral, or marginal (Davies, 2005).

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Context: Formation & Cultivation of Communities of Practice

Dimension	Description
Domain	Defines identity and what it cares about Creates passion important to personal identity of members
Community	Reflects the quality of relationships that bind members together Is led through a community coordinator and core group Feeling of community provides strong foundation for learning
Practice	Is developed by the community as members share and develop knowledge Includes a repertoire of tools, frameworks, methods, and stories Is related to learning and innovation

Communities of Practice

- Because of the complexity of transition practices, no one agency can do it alone!
- CoPs create an environment where practices can be replicated and sustained, by integrating practices across agencies.
- With this unified approach, there is a context in which projects, products, and activities can easily be developed and shared.
- This context provides an opportunity to grow transition practices exponentially.

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Potential Models for Replication

Connecting Research and Practice

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Connecting Research & Practice

There is often a disconnect between research and practice.

There are many national efforts which have identified both evidenced-based and promising transition practices.

Let's take a closer look…

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What Works Transition Research Synthesis

Source: National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center

- Effects of Curricular Interventions on the Acquisition of Functional Life Skills
- Social/Communication Interventions and Transition Outcomes
- Transition Planning/Coordinating Interventions)
- Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities

http://www.nsttac.org/content/what-works-transition-research-synthesis

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Evidence Based Practices

Source: National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center

NSTTAC's review of intervention and correlational including practice descriptions, organized by skills taught and intervention strategies, research to practice lesson plan starters, and predictors of improved post-school outcomes.

http://www.nsttac.org/content/evidence-based-practices

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What Works Clearinghouse

Source: U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences

Provides an overview, research, effectiveness rating, and references. Topics relevant to transition include adolescent literacy, character education, and dropout prevention.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

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National Standards & Quality Indicators: Transition Toolkit

Source: National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition

Research must serve as the foundation for state and local technical assistance and improvement efforts. The five key areas of Schooling, Career Preparatory Experiences, Youth Development and Youth Leadership, Family Involvement, and Connecting Activities provide a useful structure for examining critical areas of need for all youth and their families.

http://www.nasetalliance.org/toolkit/index.htm

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Learning Port

Source: IDEA Partnership, National Association of State Directors of Special Education

A National Online Library of Professional Development Resources Compiled to Help Bridge Research, Policy & Practice

http://www.learningport.us/

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Promising Practices in Vocational Rehabilitation in Transition

Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration, Dept. of Education

Promising practices identified during state monitoring that provide useful samples of programs and services that promote youth with disabilities transitioning from school to employment.

http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/promising-practices/transition-age/index.html

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Start on Success Framework for Transition from School to Work

Source: National Organization on Disability

In its first 15 years, SOS has more than doubled the odds of youth going on for further education and employment.

http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/promising-practices/transition-age/index.html

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Project SEARCH

Source: Children's Hospital of Cincinnati

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a unique, business led, one year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace.

http://www.projectsearch.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=57

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Transition Coalition

Source: University of Kansas

18-21 Program Search

http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/18-21/index.php

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Promising Practices

Source: IDEA Partnership

In addition, many promising practices are identified and shared through the National Community of Practice on Transition

http://www.ideapartnership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1485

http://www.sharedwork.org

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The Fundamentals of Successful Program Replication

How do you make it happen?

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The Fundamentals of Successful Program Replication

Too many programs flounder when they are introduced in new settings. Specific structures and processes are required to effectively replicate a program's good results. The following elements must be well defined before a program considers replication:

Source: Growing What Works, Public/Private Ventures, http://www.ppv.org/

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The Fundamentals of Successful Program Replication

- Participant characteristics (demographics, etc.),
- Intensity and duration of programming,
- Content and flexibility of activities,
- Key transition points for participants,
- Presence and types of requirements and incentives for participation,
- Performance expectations for participants and staff,
- Staff qualifications and configuration,
- Characteristics of the organizations that operate the program, and
- The program's relationships with other organizations/agencies.

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Additional questions to be answered:

- *Is the program effective and is there evidence of positive results.*
- Can the program achieve those results in a timely fashion? Have the essential program components been fully defined and is the necessary program material in place to fully explain successful implementation to new program sites to allow for quick start-up?
- *Is there training for program sites to promote quality implementation?*

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Additional questions to be answered:

- *What is the marketing plan? Is there a plan in place that will get the word out that the program is available and that it works?*
- What partnerships need to be developed? Are there coalitions, agencies or organizations with the same mission and goals that can help move the program forward and gain access to public funding streams?
- *Is there a universal data collection system? Are all program sites collecting the same data — both implementation and outcome data — and can the data be used to make a case for new or continued funding?*

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In Summary…

- Understanding the black box of interagency collaboration
- Communities of practice: Creating a context for interagency collaboration
- Transition programs for replication, connecting research and practice
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